discussed the pending claims and the "electronic storefront" metaphor of electronic commerce. Applicants' representative and the Examiner also discussed various proposed amendments to the claims. These proposed amendments clarify the distinction between the claimed electronic commerce contexts and the electronic storefront metaphor.

APPLICANTS' INVENTION

Applicants' technology facilitates the electronic purchasing of items from a single vendor by providing multiple electronic commerce contexts for each customer. Electronic commerce contexts are the various roles that a customer may fall into while conducting an electronic commerce transaction with a vendor. For example, the customer may wish to purchase items (e.g., books) that relate to her business. Alternatively, the customer may wish to purchase items that relate to her hobby. As the customer's role varies from context to context, the information needed to best facilitate electronic commerce between the customer and the vendor also varies. Examples of such context-dependent information include shipping address information, billing address information, and product recommendation information. A single vendor can customize a customer's experience depending on that customer's current context (e.g., business or hobby).

One way in which to implement the concept of electronic commerce contexts is by the use of multiple electronic shopping carts, one shopping cart per context. The customer selects one of the multiple electronic shopping carts provided by a single vendor's system. After receiving this selection, the vendor's system conducts electronic commerce with the customer using information contained within the selected electronic commerce context to customize the customer's shopping environment and facilitate the ordering of items.

While conducting electronic commerce, the vendor's system associates, with the selected electronic commerce context, information relating to the electronic commerce. The information is then available when conducting subsequent electronic commerce in that same context. For example, if a customer selects an electronic commerce context relating to her hobby, the vendor system provides product recommendations that are based on past purchases that the customer made while previously in her "hobby" electronic commerce context. Similarly, the default delivery address for any items that the customer orders will

be the same delivery address that the customer provided when previously shopping in her "hobby" electronic commerce context.

ANALYSIS

1. Rejections of claims 7, 29, 40, 45, and Related Dependent Claims

The following table summarizes the Examiner's rejections of claims 7, 29, 40, and 45, and related dependent claims. The "Xs" indicate the references used in rejecting the claims.

Office Action Paragraph No.	Claims	Rejection Type	Chelliah	Levine	LeRoy	Hartman	Yagasaki
2	7-8	102	X				
2	17-20	102	X				
2	28-30	102	X				
2	36-41	102	X				
2	45-46	102	X				
2	48-53	102	X				
2	58	102	X				
6	9-13	103	X	X	X		
6	31-22	103	X	X	X		
6	42-44	103	X	X	X		
7	15-16	103	X	X			
7	34-35	103	X	X			
8	21-27	103	X			X	
8	47	103	X			X	
10	73-84	103	X				X

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Chelliah describes an electronic storefront system for purchasing items. This system facilitates electronic commerce transactions by providing, via a user interface, access to multiple electronic vendors in an electronic mall. (Chelliah 6:5-57.) Despite indicating that each vendor within the electronic mall has access to various shared electronic commerce

support features (e.g., Commerce Subsystems), the Chelliah disclosure emphasizes the autonomy of each mall vendor, and describes but a single electronic commerce context (e.g., shopping cart) for each vendor. (Chelliah 6:59-64.)

In contrast, applicants' electronic commerce contexts provide access to multiple electronic commerce contexts for a single vendor. As depicted in Figure 1 below, Chelliah describes that, once a customer enters through an electronic storefront into a vendor's store, the customer is limited to shopping within a single electronic commerce context. (Chelliah 12:34-42). Each square represents a different vendor and each circle indicates that each customer of a vendor has only one electronic commerce context. For example, a customer shopping at "books.com" has access only to a single electronic commerce context, a typical electronic shopping cart.

ELECTRONIC MALL WITH ELECTRONIC STOREFRONTS

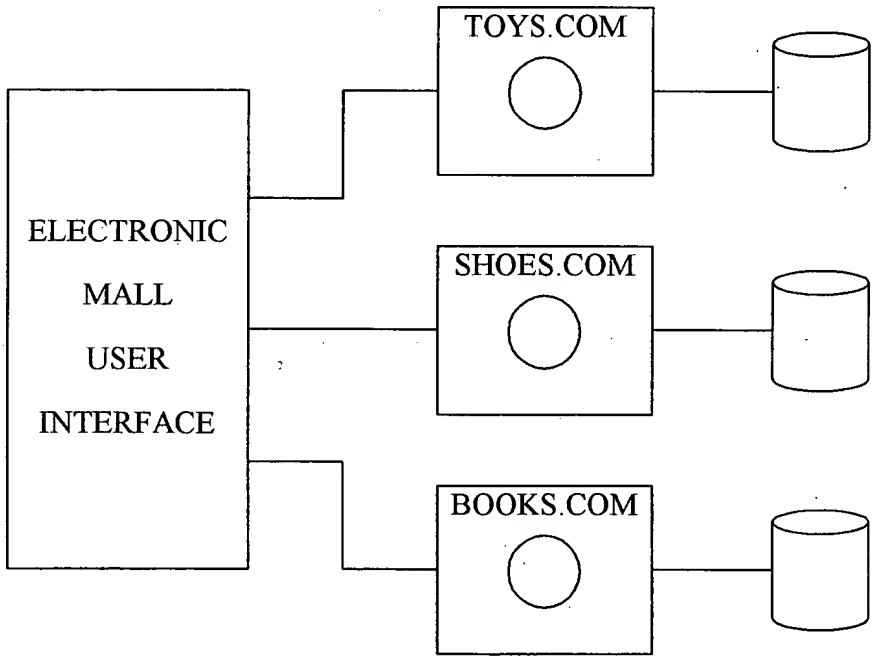

Figure 1

To the contrary, applicants' technique provides multiple electronic commerce contexts within the framework of a single vendor. As illustrated below in Figure 2, a

customer shopping at books.com may select from one of three electronic commerce contexts (e.g., business, hobby, or personal). The multiple electronic commerce contexts are illustrated by multiple circles.

ELECTRONIC MALL WITH ELECTRONIC STOREFRONTS

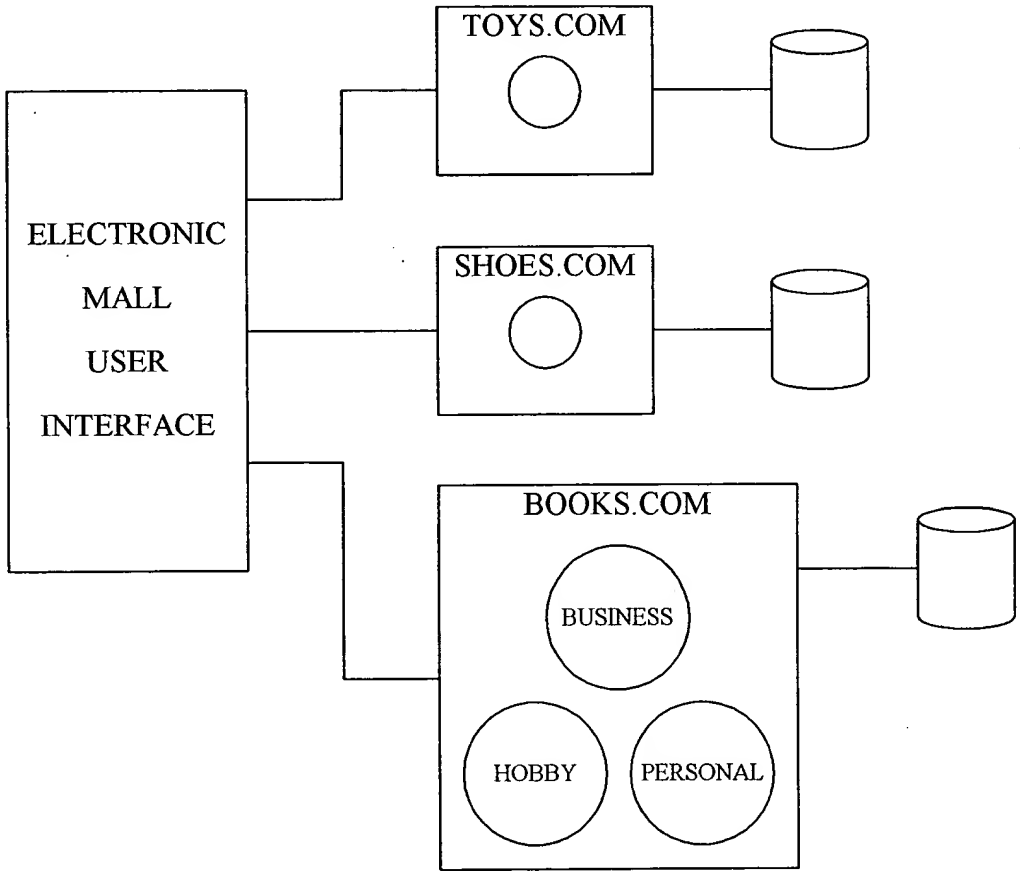

Figure 2

Thus, as depicted above, Chelliah's electronic storefronts provide access to multiple autonomous vendors, each with a single electronic commerce context, while applicants' technique provides access to multiple electronic commerce contexts within a single vendor's store. This distinction is clearly expressed in the amended claims, which specify that applicants' electronic commerce contexts are for "use in conducting electronic commerce with the vendor."

During the above mentioned telephone interview between applicants' representative and the Examiner, the Examiner requested that applicants identify a distinction between applicants' claimed subject matter and the subject matter disclosed in column 14 of the Chelliah Specification. In column 14, Chelliah recites that "[t]he selection of an item for purchase . . . is analogous to a shopper placing an item in a shopping cart in preparation for a purchase." (Chelliah, 14:64-65.) Chelliah goes on to describe that a shopper may opt to remove a selected item from the shopping cart. (Chelliah, 14:65-67, 15:1-2.) In doing this, Chelliah effectively describes a standard use of an electronic shopping cart.

As identified in the Office Action, the Examiner's concern pertaining to the subject matter disclosed in column 14 of the Chelliah reference is directed to claims 8 and 48. (Office Action, July 3, 2001, pp. 4-5.) These claims recite associating product selection information with the electronic commerce context selected by the user.

While one embodiment of applicants' invention and the Chelliah technique both use the electronic shopping cart metaphor, Chelliah fails to describe the use of multiple shopping carts within a single vendor's store. To the contrary, Chelliah associates the electronic shopping cart concept with a Sales Representative Subsystem, which functions to "monitor the customer activity" and "initiat[e] completion of the transactions." (Chelliah, 10: 44-51.) The Sales Representative Subsystem is accessible to "multiple stores, at the same time." (Yagasaki, 7:8-9.) Thus, rather than describing multiple electronic shopping carts within a single store, Chelliah describes a single electronic shopping cart to shop simultaneously for products within multiple stores.

2. Rejections of Claim 59 and Related Dependent Claims

The following table summarizes the Examiner's rejections of claims 59, 60-67, and 72:

Office Action Paragraph No.	Claims	Rejection Type	Yagasaki	Hartman
3	59-60	102	X	
9	61-67	103	X	X
9	72	103	X	X

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claims 59-67 and 72 are directed to a computer interacting with a user after an interaction context (e.g., shopping cart) has been selected.

Like Chelliah, the Yagasaki reference relates to the concept of a virtual shopping mall containing multiple autonomous electronic stores. (Yagasaki, Title.) The Yagasaki system includes a search feature that allows a user to simultaneously search, by product category, all the stores in the electronic mall. Yagasaki describes that the user issues a search request after selecting a product category from a list of categories generated and stored by the mall server. (Yagasaki, Abstract.) The system returns the identification of the vendor(s) that have products matching the search request. (Yagasaki, Figure 8, item 53.) Once the customer selects a vendor, the customer can then interact with the vendor (i.e., shop at the vendor's store) using a single, centralized order management component. (Yagasaki, 7:22-44.)

Yagasaki's search-by-product-category technique is essentially a multiple-vendor search engine. Applicants' technique of "selecting one of a plurality of interaction contexts for a user" is not similar to a search engine. Moreover, interaction contexts relate to user contexts, not product categories. Thus, Yagasaki neither teaches nor suggests the technique claimed by applicants for selecting interaction contexts or interacting with a user based on a selected interaction context.

3. Rejections of Claim 1 and Related Dependent Claims

The following table summarizes the Examiner's rejections of claims 1-6:

Office Action Paragraph No.	Claims	Rejection Type	Yagasa	Yonezawa	Hartman
4	1	103	X	X	
5	1-6	103	X		X

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Although the shopping cart metaphor is well known in the art, a variety of techniques for implementing the electronic shopping metaphor are possible. Yagasaki, when considered in view of either Yonezawa or Hartman, does not suggest "providing a plurality of electronic shopping carts for use in conducting electronic commerce." To the contrary, Yagasaki, like Yonezawa and Hartman, describes using a single shopping cart. More specifically, it describes using a single order management component to shop within the stores of multiple vendors.

Yagasaki's order management component, which is distinct from the search-by-product-category technique described in the previous section, functions as a typical electronic shopping cart. It "receives product selection information from the customer" and responds to it by returning "order entry screen data." (Yagasaki 4:53-55.) Yagasaki describes that the order management component is used in conjuction with the search-by-product-category technique. (Yagasaki, 7:22-44; Figure 3.) For example, once a customer completes a product search, the customer may then indicate product selections and purchase items from one or more stores using the order management component. (Yagasaki, 7:22-44; Figure 3.) Because Yagasaki describes using a single order management component (e.g., shopping cart) to shop within the stores of multiple vendors, a person skilled in the art has no motivation to combine Yagasaki's search-by-product-category technique with the single shopping cart technique described in either Hartman or Yonezawa to formulate a method having multiple shopping carts.

4. Rejection under Section 112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner has rejected claims 54-57 and 68-71 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which applicants regard as their invention. Applicants have amended claims 54-56 and 68-70 to address the Examiner's concerns as to contradictions within these claims.

Based upon the above remarks and amendments, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Perkins Coie LLP

Maurice J. Pirio
Registration No. 33,273

Enclosures:
Postcard
Petition for Extension of Time (+ 2 copies)
PTO-1083 (+ copy)
Appendix (Marked-up version of claims)

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Appendix – Claims
Marked to Show Changes

7. (Amended) A method in a computer system for maintaining information relating to conducting electronic commerce with a vendor, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of electronic commerce contexts for a user for use in conducting electronic commerce with the vendor, each electronic commerce context having information relating to electronic commerce conducted between the user and the vendor while in that electronic commerce context;

receiving from the user a selection of one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts;

after receiving the selection of the one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts, conducting electronic commerce ~~with~~ between the user and the vendor; and

associating, with the selected electronic commerce context, information relating to the electronic commerce conducted ~~with~~ between the user and the vendor so that when the user subsequently selects that selected electronic commerce context from the plurality of electronic commerce contexts, the associated information is available for conducting subsequent electronic commerce between the user and the vendor.

29. (Amended) A computer system for maintaining information relating to conducting electronic commerce with a vendor, comprising:

a data component for storing information relating to a plurality of electronic commerce contexts for a user, the information relating to electronic commerce conducted between the user and the vendor while in that electronic commerce context;

a component that receives from the user a selection of one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts; and

a component that, after receiving the selection of the one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts, conducts electronic commerce ~~with~~ between the user and the vendor and stores information relating to the conducted electronic commerce in association with the selected electronic commerce context.

40. (Amended) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for causing a computer system to conduct electronic commerce between a user and a vendor, by:

providing a plurality of electronic commerce contexts for use in conducting electronic commerce between the user and the vendor~~a user~~;

receiving from the user a selection of one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts; and

after receiving the selection of the one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts, conducting electronic commerce ~~with~~ between the user and the vendor in the selected electronic commerce context.

45. (Amended) A method for maintaining information relating to conducting electronic commerce with a vendor, the method comprising:

selecting one of a plurality of electronic commerce contexts for ~~a user~~use in conducting electronic commerce between the user and the vendor; and

after selecting an electronic commerce context, conducting electronic commerce ~~with~~ between the user and the vendor

whereby the conducted electronic commerce is associated with the selected electronic commerce context and whereby the user can have a plurality of electronic commerce contexts with the same vendor.

54. (Amended) The method of claim 45 wherein a user provides all of the ~~no~~ electronic commerce contexts. ~~is initially provided~~.

55. (Amended) The method of claim 45~~54~~ wherein a user provides at least one of the ~~multiple~~ electronic commerce contexts.

56. (Amended) The method of claim 45 wherein only one of the plurality of electronic commerce contexts is initially provided.

68. (Amended) The method of claim 59 wherein a user provides all of the ~~no~~ interaction contexts ~~is initially provided~~.

69. (Amended) The method of claim 5968 wherein a user ~~subsequently~~ provides ~~multiple~~ at least one of the interaction contexts.

70. (Amended) The method of claim 59 wherein only one of the plurality of interaction contexts is initially provided.